From: Derecka Mehrens
To: Ohtaki, Peter I
Subject: Just Cause wins in San Jose!
Date: Wednesday, April 19, 2017 12:47:43 PM

Working Partnerships USA

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Dear Peter,

Sixteen years ago, I came to San Jose as a young community organizer. Then as now, the housing crisis was out of control, and longtime residents were being thrown out of rent-controlled units. We fought hard for Just Cause protections against unfair evictions, but at the time the votes just weren't there.

Last night, thanks to the tireless work of the Renters' Rights coalition and the labor movement to build power for renters and working families, we won Just Cause.

At a City Council meeting that stretched late into the night, tenants told stories of being evicted for reporting mold or requesting a working stove, and of ending up homeless after losing their apartment. As supporters fasted and waved signs, the Council passed two crucial policies:

- Requiring Just Cause for evictions, so landlords can't kick out responsible tenants and hike up rents.
- Ensuring that landlords provide relocation assistance for tenants if their apartment is taken off the market for repairs or under the Ellis Act, and preserving rent-controlled units.

The Council also voted to study using the Consumer Price Index to cap rent increases on rent-controlled apartments. This would lower the ceiling for rent increases from 5% to less than 3% a year.

Just Cause supporters after the vote

Thank you to everyone from the Renters' Rights Coalition and Silicon Valley Rising who took up a hunger strike, marched, and fought so hard for this victory, and to Councilmembers Sergio Jimenez, Sylvia Arenas, Vice-Mayor Magdalena Carrasco, Donald Rocha, Raul Peralez, and Tam Nguyen for standing with San Jose's renters. In the words of Bob Brownstein, who's been championing these policies for forty years, this is a "historic" win.

These protections will help 450,000 San Jose renters — our neighbors, children, and co-workers — stay in their homes. But the fight to address Silicon Valley's housing crisis is far from over. We couldn't have won last night without your support, and we'll need your energy and dedication as we keep fighting to keep hard-working families from being priced out of our region.

In solidarity,

Derecka Mehrens
Executive Director

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